



Leadership Alignment Guidelines

This Suite of Tools Includes:

Type	Name
Doc (MS Word)	Leadership Alignment Guidelines
Doc (MS Word)	Leadership Alignment Interview Guide
PPT (PowerPoint)	Leadership Alignment Plan
PPT (PowerPoint)	Leadership Alignment Assessment Draft Report

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Summary

This document supports the creation of Leadership Alignment plans.

Application Guide

Purpose:

The purpose of this tool is to align leaders, at every level of the organization, to the business objectives of the change initiative. It identifies leadership roles and responsibilities needed throughout an engagement life cycle in order to drive implementation and leverage the change initiative.

Value to the Business:

This tool's value ensures the actions of leaders align with change initiative goals to get the required business results and maximize the return on their investment.

When to Use:

The Leader Alignment tools contain planning materials that are to be used upfront, as soon as the business case and vision have been established. Initially conducted at the enterprise level with executive leadership; then as leaders of various stakeholder groups are identified using the Stakeholder Involvement tools, it becomes necessary to extend the interview process beyond key executives.

The Leader Alignment planning materials are usable at key points in the program to ensure continued alignment. These points include the transition between the development of the solution and its implementation and deployment and the transition between a small pilot implementation and a much larger implementation wave.

Principal Outputs, Work Products, and Deliverables:

Primary: The *Leadership Alignment Report* highlights key findings from the structured interviews. *Recommendations* are for exploiting an organization's strengths and aligning the leaders. The *Leader Alignment Plan* describes what should occur to align the leaders throughout the organization.

Secondary: Identification of cultural beliefs and behaviors that may support or constrain successful implementation of the change initiative is a secondary output.

Introduction

Lessons learned from corporations who have been successful with business change initiatives clearly reveal the same fact time and time again. Business change, which results in substantial business performance improvement and value creation, starts at the top. It is imperative to align executive leadership with the organization's strategy and the business objectives of the particular initiative. Without it, major disablers of change derail business change efforts resulting anywhere from a substantial reduction in expected benefits to flat out failure. Sustained, active leadership from top executives, combined with empowerment and involvement from people throughout the enterprise, is the key to overcoming change disablers, such as:

- Lack of vision or alignment to the business goals and objectives
- Competing strategic initiatives
- Slow decision making
- Inadequate resources
- Insufficient of rewards for change
- Absence of consequences for standing in the way

In order to establish the most effective change leadership infrastructure for the business initiative, it is important to remember there are several key roles in driving the change process through the business:

Executive Sponsors These are the individuals, or groups of leaders, who have the power to start or stop the initiatives.

Program Sponsors These are the individuals, or groups of leaders, who have delegated to them most of the authority of the executive sponsors for purposes of day-to-day involvement with the change leaders, change agents, and program/ program teams.

Leaders These are the individuals, or groups of leaders, who use their positional power and influence to add credibility for the initiative and create the conditions for the success of the change teams and change agents.

Change Agents Often program/ program team leaders and participants, this group represents all those in leadership roles who actively implement actions and form the critical link between the Change Leadership and the stakeholder populations.



In addition to the roles listed here, other leaders—typically those of the key stakeholder groups—must play active roles in implementing business change.

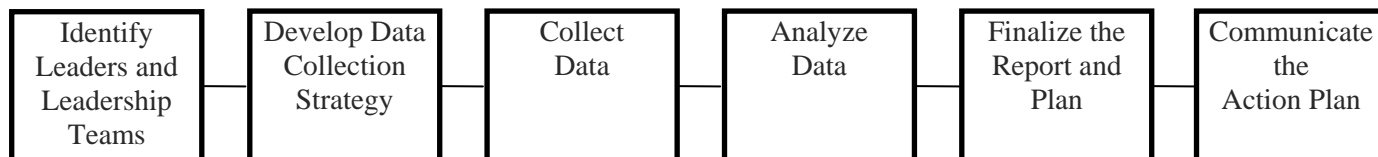
The extent to which leaders in *all* of these change roles are visibly committed, both publicly and privately—and that the commitment is sustained throughout the life cycle of the program—will be the key factor in determining the degree of success that will be achieved.

Actions required by Executive Sponsors and Leaders means they will:

- Use their positional power and influence to achieve business change objectives.
 - Build excitement for the program and its full vision.
 - Communicate the vision in a clear, compelling way to make it more concrete for others.
 - Set and meet aggressive targets, and understand and accept accountability for results.
 - Delegate and empower people to mobilize and align the workforce.
 - Apply consequences—both positive and negative—to encourage attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with achievement of the program objectives.
 - Behave without boundaries to get the job done, combined with the ability to empower others.
 - Demonstrate capacity to think and act globally and maintain a long-term organizational focus.
 - See change as an opportunity, not a threat.
 - Use their enormous energy to energize, invigorate, and inspire others to follow.
 - Allocate the resources needed for time, best people, and funds to accelerate the change program.
 - Sustain the balance between this program and other strategic initiatives.
 - Remove barriers and make tough decisions and trade-offs.
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Process Options

The following provides an overview of the Leadership Alignment Process:



Step 1: Identify Leaders and Leadership Teams

Meet with the Executive Sponsor(s) to identify individual leaders, as well as leadership teams (e.g., top leadership team, division leadership teams, business leadership councils, etc.) who must be involved, either directly as Leaders in charge of the change initiative, or as leaders who must support and actively drive implementation in their respective areas. (NOTE: The Stakeholder Mapping Solution tools serve as a useful source of information in identifying the necessary leadership that must be involved.)

Step 2: Develop Data Collection Strategy

The above step determines who will participate in the Leader Alignment Planning; this step determines how to collect data from the leaders. It is most effective to interview key executives first to determine if alignment exists at the top of the organization. If alignment does not exist at the executive level, it probably will not exist at any other level of the organization. Thus, the Change Leadership Team must develop a very specific plan to educate and align the executive level before moving to the entire leadership team. After the data is collected and a plan created for the executives, the next activity is determining the next group to assess. Another part of the data collection strategy is determining the right questions to ask of each particular leadership group and how much time will be spent interviewing leaders.

Step 3: Collect Data

Step three involves establishing all the logistics to conduct the interviews. Creating communication that discloses the objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting is critical. Before conducting the data collection, it is important to develop an interviewing protocol – this will allow for consistency if there is more than one person conducting interviews. When conducting the assessment it is also important to discuss anonymity versus confidentiality in order to inform key leaders that the results will contain their comments but that said results would not attribute the comments directly to them. Respect the leader's time commitments and make certain to start and stop on time. Leave the



interview communicating what are the next steps in the process. The **Leadership Alignment Interview Guide** is usable as a sample interview guide/protocol while conducting these interviews.

Step 4: Analyze Data

Analyze all the information collected in step three by developing common themes and highlighting specific comments that support each theme. Document areas where there is leadership alignment and highlight areas where attention is necessary to align the leaders.

Step 5: Finalize the Report and Plan

For all the themes identified during the analysis phase, develop recommendations or plans of action to exploit the alignment and realign where it does not exist. It is most effective to develop these recommendations in conjunction with the Executive Sponsors or Program Leadership (see the **Leadership Alignment Sample Deliverable**).

Step 6: Communicate the Action Plan

One of the more challenging aspects of developing the Leadership Alignment recommendations is working with the Executive Sponsors in the deployment of actions identified. The report has identified key actions needed by leadership throughout the business. While these steps and support are critical to the success of the initiatives, by the very nature of the individuals and teams it targets, it must not look like they are being “told” what to do. These are the leaders—people who have attained their current role because they have already demonstrated strong leadership traits and abilities.

The responsibility of the Executive Sponsor is to work with the leaders and leadership teams identified to share the rationale for creating a **Leadership Alignment Plan** to explain the magnitude of actions required by the leadership teams in the business, and to use the plan as a catalyst in discussing roles and responsibilities with those identified in the plan.

At some point in the process, the Change Leadership Team will share the **Leadership Alignment Assessment Draft Report** with the Executive Sponsor and Program Leadership team, but should not necessarily send it as an “intact” document to the leaders throughout the business. The Executive Sponsor may choose, however, to distribute it or to review it with select leaders. The important focus is to make sure to communicate the key messages through the right channels, whether or not through the document itself.

The **Leadership Alignment Plan** captures the needs and responsibilities of the leaders throughout the business, including those in Executive Sponsor and Change Leader roles, in addition to other leaders where support is critical to success. The plan has several important objectives:

- Provide the overall strategy for leading the program/program change process.
- Identify leaders and leadership roles and responsibilities with respect to the change initiative.
- Communicate those roles to the leaders via the Executive Sponsors.
- Plan the actions required and the support needed to accomplish the plan.

Tips, Techniques, and Cautions

Repeated experience has shown the following tips, techniques, and cautions to be invaluable.

Tips and Techniques	Cautions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with both senior management and key influencers at all levels. • Allocate clear accountabilities and publicly monitor and measure them. • Celebrate (interim) successes. • Focus on being a good Change Leader, not just a popular one. • Align leaders' words with actions and focus. • Provide early feedback (positive and constructive). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program team member conducting leader interviews must be perceived as an equal to the leadership team. • Do not become a political football. • Ensure support from the person the leader reports to. • Beware of slipping back to old ways of behaving. • Do not let the leaders get too far ahead, leaving their people behind.